

# Ballot Measure 2 - Initiative Petition

(b)

## Moving Location of Legislative Session

### BALLOT LANGUAGE

This bill would move all sessions of the state legislature to the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough. If facilities fit for these sessions cannot be found in that borough, sessions would be held in Anchorage until facilities are available in the Mat-Su Borough. The bill would repeal the requirements that before the state can spend money to move the legislature, the voters must be informed of the total costs as would be determined by a commission, and approve a bond issue for all bondable costs of the move.

SHOULD THIS INITIATIVE BECOME LAW?

YES ☐

NO ☐

### BALLOT MEASURE SUMMARY

#### Prepared by the Legislative Affairs Agency

This would make the legislature hold sessions in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Until there is a suitable place for sessions in that borough, they must be held in Anchorage. A special session might be held elsewhere. The law that relates to voter approval of costs of a capital move is changed. It would no longer apply to a move of the legislature. Other laws are or will be changed to conform. Sessions held after January 1, 2005 must be moved. The legislature should move sooner if practical.

### FULL TEXT OF PROPOSED LAW

#### AN INITIATIVE CHANGING THE LOCATION OF LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

#### BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

##### Section 1. Location of Legislative Sessions

AS 24.05.090 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

##### AS 24.05.090. Legislative Sessions

(a) All regular and special sessions of the legislature shall be held at a location within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. In the event that suitable facilities for these sessions are not available within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, then all sessions shall be held at a location within the Municipality of Anchorage, but only until suitable facilities within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough become available. Special sessions may be held elsewhere in the state, if necessary, in accord with AS 24.05.100(b).

The legislature shall convene each year on the second Monday in January at 10:00 a.m., except that following a gubernatorial election year, the legislature shall convene on the third Tuesday in January, at 10:00 a.m. Each legislature shall have a duration of two years and shall consist of a "First Regular Session", which shall meet in the odd-numbered years, and a "Second Regular Session" which shall meet in the even-numbered years, together with any special session or sessions that the governor or legislature may find it necessary to call.

##### Section 2. Specific Conforming Amendments

The following Alaska statutes are amended as indicated:

(a) AS 24.05.100(b) is amended to substitute "at the location provided in AS 24.05.090(a)" for "at the capital" in both locations "at the capital" appears.

(b) The last sentence of AS 24.10.030 is amended to substitute "session location" for "capital."

(c) AS 15.13.072(d)(2), AS 15.13.072(g), AS 24.10.130(a), AS 24.60.030(a)(2)(E), AS 24.60.030(a)(5)(E), AS 24.60.031(a)(1), AS 24.60.031(a)(2), AS 24.60.031(a)(3), and AS 24.60.080(c)(7) are amended to substitute "session location" for "capital city" in all locations "capital city" appears.

(d) AS 24.45.041(b)(1) and AS 24.50.040 are amended to substitute "session location" for "state capital" in all locations "state capital" appears.

(e) AS 24.45.041(e) is amended to substitute "session location" for "state capitol building."

(f) AS 24.50.010 is amended to delete "in the capital."

(g) AS 44.06.050 is amended to delete "or the legislature" in all locations "or the legislature" appears.

(g) The first sentence of AS 44.06.055 is amended to delete "or the legislature", and to substitute "the capital" for "a functioning state legislature or capital".

(h) AS 44.06.060 is amended to add "except for relocation of legislative sessions" at the end of the existing section.

##### Section 3. General Conforming Amendment

Any and all additional provisions of the Alaska Statutes which conflict with AS 24.05.090(a) are hereby amended to conform with AS 24.05.090(a). The revisor of statutes for the State of Alaska is authorized and directed to make these corrections with appropriate language.

*The text of this bill is presented as submitted by the petition sponsors.*

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### Section 4. Severability

The provisions of this Act are independent and severable, and if any provision of this Act, or the applicability of any provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the fullest extent practicable.

### Section 5. Applicable Date

This Act applies to sessions of the legislature commencing after January 1, 2005. The legislative sessions should be relocated earlier if practicable.

### **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT**

In November, 2002, the voters of Alaska will have an opportunity to bring the Legislature back to the people of Alaska. In the distant past, Juneau was the population center of Alaska. Not any more. Now, more than 85% of Alaskans live closer to Anchorage and the Matanuska/Susitna Borough than they do to Juneau, and this percentage is continuing to increase. It is now time to bring the Legislature back to the people of Alaska.

The Legislature should meet in Anchorage or the Matanuska/Susitna Borough, for the following reasons:

\* **ACCESSIBILITY** - The Legislative sessions will be much more accessible to the vast majority of Alaskans. The meetings will be on the road system, instead of in a location inaccessible by road and rail, and often closed to air travel. Because it is so expensive to travel to Juneau, many Alaskans have never even visited our capital city. With an accessible Legislature, citizens will have the opportunity to communicate more effectively with their legislators and participate more fully in their government. Electronic communication cannot replace face-to-face contact.

\* **ACCOUNTABILITY** - At present, the Legislature is accountable to well-funded special interest groups and lobbyists, who inhabit the legislative halls during the legislative sessions. The average citizen cannot afford to travel to Juneau. When the citizens of Alaska are actually able to attend and participate in the legislative process, we can expect more accountability to the people. The legislators will complete their business more efficiently when under public scrutiny, and sessions should be shorter.

\* **AFFORDABILITY** - Contrary to the claims of the opponents of the move, the taxpayers will save money in the long run by moving the Legislature to a central location. Currently, all but three legislators must move themselves, their offices, and

staffs to Juneau during the legislative session. Additionally, these legislators travel back and forth during session to meet with constituents in their own districts. If the Legislature is moved to a central location, the moving and travel expenses for nearly half the legislators would be saved. Additional money would be saved because state employees would not have to travel to Juneau to appear before the Legislature.

It will not be necessary to build expensive buildings to support a legislative move. More than half the legislators already have offices in Anchorage. Facilities for meetings are available in Anchorage, and can be made available in the Matanuska/Susitna Borough by remodeling existing buildings. Land already owned by local governments is available, if necessary.

Moving the Legislature out of Juneau will not destroy Juneau. Juneau's economy is strong with tourism, fishing, mining, and federal and state offices which will not be abandoned just because the Legislature meets elsewhere. In addition, Juneau has a bright future if it develops and markets its many attributes. Juneau will remain the capital of Alaska. This initiative simply requires that the Legislature be accessible to the vast majority of Alaskans.

Please vote YES on Ballot Measure No. 2 and bring the Legislature back to the people of Alaska.

Alaskans for Efficient Government  
By Bill Dam and Karen Bretz

Senator Randy Phillips  
Muldoon - Fort Richardson - Eagle River

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### STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION

#### **Ballot Measure 2 would take away your right to know and vote on the costs.**

¥ Ballot Measure 2 asks you to give up provisions of the FRANK (Fiscally Responsible Alaskans Needing Knowledge) Initiative that guarantee Alaskans' right to know and vote on the costs of moving the Legislature.

¥ The FRANK Initiative was overwhelmingly approved in 1994 by 77 percent of Alaska voters.

¥ Ballot Measure 2 asks you to give up the requirements that, before the state can spend money to move the Legislature, voters must be informed of the total costs - as would be determined by a neutral commission - and approve a bond issue for all bondable costs of a move.

¥ Under Ballot Measure 2, you would lose your right to know and vote on the costs of a legislative move. It would be like giving lawmakers a blank check because you would not know the costs.

¥ The Alaska Democratic Party passed a resolution opposing this initiative and the Republican Party of Alaska passed a resolution reaffirming the right of Alaskans to know and vote on the costs of a legislative move as stated in the FRANK Initiative.

#### **Can Alaska afford Ballot Measure 2?**

¥ Alaskans could pay for moving the Legislature twice because, if facilities fit for the Legislature cannot be found in the Mat-Su Borough, Ballot Measure 2 would require two moves - first to Anchorage, then to the Mat-Su.

¥ The state faces billion-dollar deficits. Is this the time to give up your right to know and vote on the costs of a legislative move?

¥ Don't we have better things to do with our money - such as schools, roads, and public safety?

¥ Don't Alaskans deserve to know what we would have to pay to move the Legislature and to vote on those costs?

#### **Read your ballot carefully.**

#### **It's a question of rights.**

#### **Maintain your right to know the costs.**

### **Maintain your right to vote on the costs.**

#### **Vote NO on Ballot Measure 2.**

Alaska Committee  
By Winthrop H. Gruening, Chair

FRANK Committee  
By C.B. Bettisworth, Chair